



Dog Care Volunteering



Objective

The main motivation behind this project is to provide a high level of care to the most neglected and vulnerable street dogs of southern Sri Lanka, so they have the best possible chance to survive and thrive despite the difficult odds they face. We have partnered with Animal SOS Sri Lanka (<https://www.animalsos-sl.com>), a highly regarded charity registered in both UK and Sri Lanka, for this project. They care for approximately 2,000 dogs in their facility which is one of the largest animal care facilities in all of Sri Lanka. The dogs are divided in two adjacent units which house approximately 1,000 dogs each. The dogs are cared for in a beautiful, free-roaming sanctuary which provides a safe-haven for sick, disabled, and vulnerable strays. There is also an on-site veterinary clinic with resident local vets providing life-saving treatment and care. They operate neutering/rabies vaccination programs in the local area, adoption schemes and animal welfare education.

The goals of the organization and this project are:

- To provide quality care and rehabilitation for all dogs that need it, including sick, injured and disabled dogs.
- To facilitate socialization for puppies and adult dogs to help them feel more comfortable around people, enhancing their emotional well-being and preparing them for potential adoption opportunities.
- Offer physical and mental stimulation for disabled dogs and assist with their daily physical needs.
- To equip volunteers with hands-on skills in animal care and strengthening their commitment to humane animal welfare practices.

Background

There are an estimated 3 million stray dogs in Sri Lanka many of whom suffer immensely through malnutrition, disease, and horrific injuries. A significant portion of the local public's knowledge/awareness of dogs (and animals in general) is unfortunately still quite limited and often regressive leading to ill-treatment and abuse. Most dogs live on the streets, and many are in an appalling state. Unsprayed females produce several litters of puppies every year, many of which are simply abandoned in front of temples or at the gates of shelters.

These puppies are usually too small to have even the slightest chance of survival unless provided with care. Many of them die of hunger or due to parasites or fall victim to animal abusers. Unfortunately, the Sri Lankan government turns a blind eye to this problem and does nothing to support the well-being of stray dogs. Hence, it is of utmost importance to provide these vulnerable dogs with a level of care that gives them the best chance to survive and thrive. With a distinct lack of safe havens and veterinary care available to strays in Sri Lanka, the work and facilities provided in this project are a lifeline to many otherwise doomed dogs. The goal of this project is to provide a dignified, joyful, and protected way of life to these beautiful creatures and give them new hope where there was none before.

What our Participants do on the Project

Volunteers spend most of their project time at the dog care facility performing hands-on work with dogs that need the attention and care. They also assist in various activities around the facilities, including local beaches and streets, to assist with the care work and day-to-day operations as needed.

The type of tasks volunteers can expect to undertake include

- High level of engagement with dogs and dog activities (playing, cuddling, etc.)
- Assisting during mealtime feeding

- Working with injured and disabled dogs and using a range of rehabilitation techniques such as hydrotherapy, wheelchair therapy and more (involves weekly trips to the local beach for these activities)
- Cleaning the general areas to maintain hygiene
- Helping with socializing certain dogs
- Puppy care
- Occasionally assisting with building various tools for the betterment of the dogs' experience (e.g., building small sheds, utility tools, toys, etc.)
- Other day-to-day tasks as appropriate

The main shift happens in the morning (usually from 8 AM to 12 PM) but the times can be altered slightly depending on time of year and the needs of the project. There is also the possibility of conducting afternoon shifts from time to time as per the needs of the project.

Other Information

Availability: All year round (no blackout dates), except from April 13th to 15th due to Sinhala and Tamil New Year

Arrival & Departure Days: Saturdays Project Workdays: Monday to Friday (weekends are free)

Age Requirement: Must be **16 years** or over

Capacity: Maximum of 30 participants at one time

Nearest Airport: Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport

Location of Project: Ahangama, Sri Lanka (20-30 minutes from our Volunteer House)

Support Provided: On arrival, a detailed orientation & training program is provided, including health and safety training, culture training and an area orientation tour. All operational activities are managed, guided and supported by our experienced local team. Local transportation to and from the project is included every day. On the project, all participants get an introduction/orientation session on their first day. The project site has an experienced team of approximately 60 people consisting of veterinarians, caretakers, operations personnel, and other support staff. There are 3 Managers who will be overseeing the volunteers on a daily basis and also assigning them various tasks each week.

Recommended Attire: Clothing should be casual and comfortable– no restrictions as such except that it should not be too revealing since locals are generally more on the conservative side. Footwear can be comfortable sneakers or sandals. Sunscreen

recommended since a lot of the work is done outside. Light rain jacket recommended during the wet season (June-November)

Vaccine Recommendation: We strongly recommend participants get the anti-rabies vaccine before joining this project to cover for any unexpected bites or injuries that may occur in their day-to-day activities. These rarely ever happens but it's better to be safe than sorry.